

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 336

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (WOFF, LESTER) SNAR, AS
SUBJ: CODEL WOLFF

1. SUMMARY. NARCOTICS BRIEFING AT DEPT. OF BUSINESS AND
CONSUMAR AFFAIRS JAN 11 WAS ATTENDED BY CONGRESSMEN RANGEL,
GUYER, AND SKUBITZ. MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY BRIAN BATES,
DIRECTOR OF AUSTRALIAN NARCOTICS BUREAU. ALSO PRESENT WERE
HIS DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DAN SCULLION, AND OTHER OFFICIALS FROM
NARCOTICS BUREAU, DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
AND ROYAL COMMISSION ON DRUGS. END SUMMARY.

2. BATES INITIATED THE DISCUSSION BY DESCRIBING FORMATION
AND SCOPE OF ROYAL COMMISSION ON DRUGS, RECENTLY COMMISSIONED
TO LOOK INTO ALL ASPECTS OF DRUG SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA.
THERE HAD BEEN A 1971 SENATE STUDY ON DRUGS, AND THE
ELEVATION OF THIS TOPIC TO A ROYAL COMMISSION WAS AN
INDICATION OF THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT REGARDED THE PROBLEM.
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PAGE 02 CANBER 00336 130701Z

3. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ON MARIHUANA, AUSTRALIANS
DESCRIBED JURISDICTIONAL SITUATION AS BETWEEN STATES AND
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. LATTER HAS JURISDICTION OVER IMPORT/
EXPORT AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY, WHILE STAES HAVE
JURISDICTION ON PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND USE WITHIN
THEIR BORDERS. WHIEL PENALTIES ACCORDINGLY VARY FROM STATE

TO STATE, NONE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BODIES WHICH HAS CONSIDERED MARIHUANA HAS SUPPORTED DECRIMINALIZATION, AND IT CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR FOCUS OF ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS IN ALL JURISDICTIONS.

4. FROM TREATMENT STANDPOINT, AUSTRALIANS OBSERVED, MARIHUANA IS OF LOWER CONCERN. INDEED, IN TERMS OF DEATHS AND MEDCAL PROBLEMS, NON-NARCOTIC DRUGS ARE OF GREATER CONSEQUENCE THAN NARCOTICS IN AUSTRALIA. THESE INCLUDE ALCOHOL, IN WHICH AUSTRALIA HAS EXTREMELY HIGH CONSUMPTION RATE, ALCOHOLISM RATE, AND ALCOHOL-RELATED AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT RATE, AND ANALGESICS, WHICH ARE A MAJOR CAUSE OF KIDNEY DISEASE IN AUSTRALIA.

5. PRECISE STATISTICS ON SEVERAL ASPECS OF NARCOTICS USAGE AND ABUSE ARE NOT PRESENTLY AVAILABLE, IN PART BECAUSE OF INTER-MIX OF STATE AND FEDERAL JURISDICTION. THUS, THERE ARE NO NATIONAL FIGURES ON OVERDOSE DEATHSN,5#97&# 8,\$8CATIVE FIGURE IS ESTIMMTE OF ONE DEATH EVERY TWO AND ONE-HALF WEEKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES, OR ABOUT 21 PER YEAR (N.S.W. HAS 35 PERCENT OF TOTAL AUSTRALIAN POPULATIN).

6. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON METHADONE TREATMENT, AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS INDICATED THEY HAD BECOME AWARE OF PROBLEM OF METHADONE ADDICTION BY THOSE WHO WERE HEROIN USERS BUT NOT PHYSICALLY ADDICTED, AND THAT RIGOROUS TESTING IS NOW BEING UNDERTAKEN TO DETERMINE ADDICTION PRIOR TO ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CANBER 00336 130701Z

METHADONE TREATMENT PROGRAM. AS MANY AS HALF OF ESTIMATED 1200 ON METHADONE TREATMENT MAY PEERHAPS NOT HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY ADDICTED AT TIME METHADONE TREATMENT WAS BEGUN.

7. AUSTRALIANS REPORTED THAT THEIR PREVNTIVE EFFORTS ARE INCORPORATED IN OVERALL SCHOOL GOOD-HEALTH, GOOD-CITIZENSHIP APPROACH, WITH CARE BEING TAKEN TO AVOID STIMULATING CURIOSITY ABOUT DRUGS THAT MIGHT LEAD TO EXPERIMENTATION.

8. ON ENFORCEMENT FRONT, OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT HEROIN SEIZURES ARE UP OVER A FEW YEARS AGO, BUT THAT SIZURES REPRESNET PERHAPS ONLY 10 PERCENT OF IMPORTS. THERE APPEARS AT PRESENT TO BE NO DISCERNIBLE PATTERN OF HARD DRUG USAGE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC OR ETHNIC GROUP. IMPORT TENDS TO BE BY SMALL USER GROUPS BRINGING IN ENOUGH TO SUPPLY GROUP FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. DRUG-RELATED CRIME TENDS TO CONSIST OF ROBBERY OF PHARMACIES TO OBTAIN DRUGS RATHER THAN CRIME TO OBTAIN MONEY TO BUY DRUGS. THERE IS LITTLE INDICATION OF DRUG TRANSSHIPMENT FROM AUSTRALIA.

9. CONGRESSMEN POINTED OUT DESIRABILITY OF COMPREHENSIVE STATISTICAL BASE AS AID IN KEEPING ON TOP OF DEVELOPING DRUG

PROBLEM AND OF DESIRABILITY OF EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND
EXPERIENCE. MR. BATES INDICATED THAT IN AGENT TRAINING
AREA, HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF
A REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN AND AMERICAN PROCEDURES IN RELATIVELY
NEAR FUTURE TO ENSURE THAT RECENT U.S. DEVELOPMENS HAVE
BEEN OR WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO AUSTRALIAN TRAINING
PROGRAM.

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